



V Corman's new VAMPIRE flicks

Just in case you hadn't heard, the big movie craze of the moment is vampire flicks. So pay attention suckers, because this month we're getting our teeth into a Sneak Preview of two blood-sucking tales of terror from that master of low budget movie mayhem, Roger Corman. Pass the ketchup Rog...



Most Hollywood film producers spend more time making deals than they do making movies. Not so Roger Corman, who churns out so many titles through his Concorde/New Horizons company that it's almost a case of going into your video shop and asking: "Is the mid-week Corman in yet?"

Of course it's a long time since former bellboy Rog got his modest start in the industry turning out low-rent 50s classics like *A Bucket Of Blood* and *The Beast With A Million Eyes*. He even managed to shoot movies like *The Terror* and *The Little Shop Of Horrors* over a hectic weekend. Nowadays Corman prefers to concentrate on the production side and leaves the directing chores to others - though he did recently make a brief return to the director's chair with the underrated science fiction chiller *Frankenstein Unbound*.

Ever the opportunist, Corman is still quick to spot a trend and capitalise on it. So, hot on the heels of the new big budget *Dracula* movie (ironically, directed by his one-time protege Francis Ford Coppola), Roger is bringing us not one, but two separate vampire yarns. If the tooth be told, you've got to admire the guy's neck...

The most ambitious of these is *Dracula Rising*, a time travel story about an American woman who sets out to restore a Transylvanian monastery and finds herself

transported back to the 15th Century, where she has a creepy encounter with the son of Vlad Dracula - known as "The Impaler" because of his anti-social habit of popping unwelcome visitors on the end of sharp spikes!

According to Corman: "*Dracula Rising* is a sequel of sorts to *Frankenstein Unbound*. There's a similarity of titles and in both pictures a person gets to travel back in time to meet either Frankenstein or Dracula. We've definitely taken the route to follow up on the *Frankenstein Unbound* concept. Stacey Travis (of *Hardware*) plays the heroine, and she's very good..."

Many people have wondered why Corman didn't go the whole hog and go for a film version of the literary sequel to *Frankenstein Unbound* - entitled (logically enough) *Dracula Unbound*, by the same author, Brian Aldiss. "I liked the novel," says Corman, "and would have loved to have made it into a movie. But it would have required a far bigger budget than we are spending on *Dracula Rising*. Our budgets are going up in general, because you can no longer make a movie for under \$1 million. But we still don't have the kind of money to spend that the majors do. And even if we did, we wouldn't want to!"

Evidence of the truth of that can be found in the fact that Steven Spielberg's forthcoming dinosaur epic



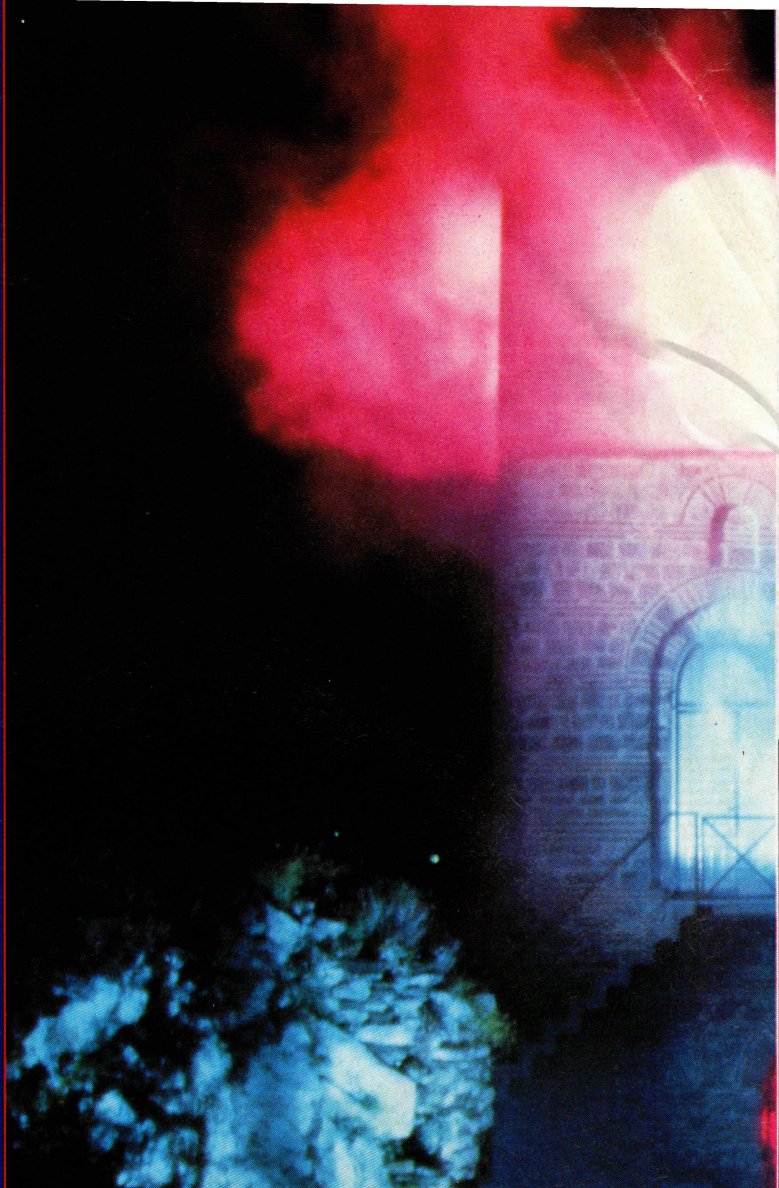
Jurassic Park is expected to cost \$50 million at least, while Roger's rip-off version (called *Carnosaur*) is just about to go before the cameras for \$4 million - making it his most expensive project to date.

But back to the blood-suckers. Corman's other assault on the Dracula market comes with *To Sleep With A Vampire*, directed by Adam Friedman, a Corman discovery who the producer expects great things of. The story of this one is about a vampire who gets involved in a one-night affair with a despondent stripper. She welcomes his fateful advances, and afterwards goes off to vamp it up with anyone else who happens to be wandering the night-time streets of L.A.

If this sounds a mite familiar then the chances are you've stumbled across a similar plot in *Dance Of The Damned*, which was (co-incidentally) also made by Corman's Concorde Productions. "We've taken *Dance Of The Damned* and rewritten it to give it more scope and make it a slightly bigger-looking picture," admits Corman. "I think that it is going to turn out a great deal better from the rushes I've seen it may be one of our most successful pictures."

With so many independents biting the bullet in today's recession-ridden movie industry, Corman puts the secret of his continued success down to sheer hard graft. "My staff and I work very hard, and we try and remain creative and flexible, to move with the changes, both in the market and in technology. We're utilising special effects today that were undreamed of when I started. And I assume that ten years from now we will still be making these types of films and working with technology nobody is working with today. It's a very exciting time."

No release date has yet been set for either *Dracula Rising* or *To Sleep With A Vampire*, but it seems almost inevitable that both pictures will go directly to video in the shrinking UK market. Stateside, though, things are a little bit different. "All of our films have at least a limited theatrical distribution," says Roger. *Dracula Rising* and *Carnosaur* will both get a fairly broad release, moving from one region to another."





In the meantime Corman is already moving ahead with the inevitable sequels, *Watchers III*, *Cyborg II*, and a movie called *Stepmonster*, in which a young boy discovers that his stepmother is a creature from another universe.

Concludes Corman: "I think that all films, whether horror, science-fiction, or any other genre, must have something that separates them from the average film. To make an ordinary horror film or murder mystery or action adventure is something we stay away from, because our budgets are limited and we can't compete with the major studios. But we have been successful with horror and fantasy films for the last thirty years, so we must be doing something right!"

